

Will Provide Support Equipment and Lease for Bus Line in St. Charles and St. John the Baptist Parishes and Airfield Improvements in St. Mary Parish

April 15, 2008

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Rep. Charlie Melancon (D-LA) announced today that the U.S. Department of Transportation has awarded nearly \$850,000 toward creating a transit system connecting communities in St. Charles and St. John the Baptist Parishes and to upgrade an airfield drainage system in St. Mary Parish.

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"As South Louisianians finish filing their tax returns today, we can take some comfort in the fact that the money we send to Washington is coming back to us through federally funded grants and projects like these," Rep Melancon said. **"These grants are an investment in the Third District's infrastructure that will make transportation in this region safer and more efficient. I am pleased the DOT recognized the need for these projects and I will continue to work in Congress to make sure our federal tax dollars are returned to south Louisiana."**

The River Parishes Transit Authority was awarded \$348,757 from DOT's Federal Transit Administration toward initiating a new public transit service in St. Charles and St. John the Baptist Parishes that will connect rural and urban areas of these parishes. The funds will be

used to pay the lease on an administrative/maintenance facility, purchase computer hardware and software, fare collection equipment and other expenses. Eventually, bus service will be offered weekdays in four zones and six zones during peak hours, offering increased transportation capabilities for the residents of these parishes. The Department of Transportation believes 70 percent of riders will come from rural areas, easing transportation issues for many rural residents in particular.

"This grant will help the River Parishes Transit Authority provide more efficient bus services to residents in St. Charles and St. John the Baptist Parishes, easing their daily commutes," Rep. Melancon said. **"A strong economy in south Louisiana depends on a workforce with adequate transportation, especially those workers in rural communities."**

The Harry P. Williams Memorial Airport in St. Mary Parish will also receive \$497,581 from the Federal Aviation Administration to complete repairs and improvements to the airfield drainage system and mitigate erosion on the airfield. This grant will improve the safety and the infrastructure quality of the airfield and allow for more efficient operation for its users.

"Completing repairs to the airfield drainage system at Williams Memorial Airport is an important project that ensures the airfield operates safely and efficiently," Rep. Melancon said.

"These upgrades will keep safe the planes using the airfield and reduce the risk of erosion that would hinder the airfield's operations."

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